



LIVE

WORK

LEARN

MISSISSIPPI ARTS COMMISSION  
STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS  
2014 - 2018





Our **MISSION**  
is to be a catalyst for the arts and creativity in Mississippi.

Our **VISION**  
is to support and celebrate  
Mississippi's creative and innovative spirit.

Our **CORE VALUES**  
are:

- Objectivity and Clarity
- Transparency
- Collaboration
- Professionalism



# STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS 2014 - 2018:

In order to significantly affect and enhance the arts in Mississippi in the coming years, we have committed to pursuing the following three innovative

## STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS:

### WORK(PLACE):

MAC will advocate and advance Mississippi's  
**CREATIVE ECONOMY**  
through:

- Community development partnerships
- Innovative workforce development
- Arts-based grants and services
- Comprehensive and diverse community-building opportunities

### LEARN(ING COMMUNITIES):

MAC will invigorate  
**LIFELONG LEARNING**

in the arts through:

- Arts Education grants and programs
- Evolution of the Whole Schools Initiative
- Community learning strategies
- Professional development opportunities for constituents and for MAC staff

### LIVE(ABILITY):

MAC will promote holistic, sustainable and attractive Mississippi communities and neighborhoods by supporting heritage, community and arts-based quality of life through:

- GRANTS
- PROGRAMS
- PARTNERSHIPS



# AGENCY OVERVIEW

The Mississippi Arts Commission (MAC) - envisioned by the United States Congress in 1965 through the creation of the National Endowment for the Arts and established, enabled and funded in 1968 by the Mississippi Legislature - is the official grant-making and service agency for the arts in the state, providing financial and technical assistance for arts programming to arts organizations and educational institutions throughout Mississippi. The principal areas addressed by the Arts Commission are community arts development and arts in education. Funded annually by the National Endowment for the Arts, the Mississippi state legislature, and private funds, the Mississippi Arts Commission uses this support to carry forth its mission and continues to act as a core and essential function of government.

The Mississippi Arts Commission, in the current economic climate, is focused on spending time, resources, and energy on: professional development workshops, community engagement and partnerships. During the strategic plan period of 2014 through 2018, we predict a continuing climate of austerity and level or reduced funding. In response, MAC anticipates a shift from being historically grant-oriented to growing and expanding its service orientation to the constituency. Since its creation, the agency's establishing language suggests three sources of funding for the agency: National Endowment for the Arts grants, state appropriation, and contributions from private sources.

As public funding remains level or reduced, the agency will strategically expand private sources through the Mississippi Endowment for the Arts (Community Foundation of Greater Jackson) and the state network of Community Foundations. While state arts agencies are being down-sized, re-envisioned, and reorganized, MAC's strategic plan will continue to go where "the lights are on," seeking conversations with those who are currently served, as well as those who are underserved and never-served.



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The strategic planning process began in October 2011 when planning consultant, Morrie Warshawski, was hired to assist MAC in the 2014-2018 Strategic Plan. Warshawski, who has worked extensively in Mississippi in the past and with MAC on its previous plan, has expertise in strategic planning with communities, arts organizations, and other state arts agencies across the country.

Our planning process has been broadly inclusive and has included a wide array of survey techniques across our state. Through regional, public town hall meetings in five communities, one-on-one discovery interviews with stakeholders in the state, and listening tour surveys of diverse citizens, we reached over 1,000 people who gave MAC open and honest feedback regarding its programs and their needs as individual artists, arts organizations, and citizens of Mississippi. In addition, an internet survey was distributed to 3,000 citizens and received an impressive 27% response rate to our questions about the arts and their role in Mississippi communities. All documented information was subject to content analysis by MAC's arts consultant. Following review of the analysis, key issues were explored during a MAC board and staff retreat. Information from the retreat, public meetings, surveys, and additional data from internal evaluations was assessed and used to form the basis for the new plan.

Some of our key findings were:

- Mississippians value their state's unique culture and strong sense of place.
- Constituents are committed to the value of arts education and creative thinking in schools and communities.
- Citizens are embracing Mississippi's Creative Economy as the sum of all wealth generated by the state's cultural and creative enterprises, institutions, people and places. It also adds value to traditional economic sectors like manufacturing, agriculture, service and tourism, while influencing where people choose to live, work and learn.
- The arts community understands that communication and marketing directly affect audience participation and that diversity issues must be addressed.
- Constituents believe that the "human factor" is still crucial and understand the power and benefits of teamwork. They value MAC's ability to assist individuals and communities to work together.
- MAC's commitment to consistent professional development is significant to the arts and education communities.
- The arts community wants continued and increased clarity of MAC's resources and services, especially around technology and media concepts.
- Citizens want MAC to be successfully funded; they support reinstatement of the Building Fund for the Arts, the bricks and mortar bond bill that gives the arts an address in communities.

As the agency enters the implementation phase of the strategic planning process, these elements will be weighed against ongoing federal and state budgetary challenges and against its own set of resources, both human and fiscal, to design a powerfully focused and innovative course to serve Mississippi.

# GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

The Mississippi Arts Commission's work is shaped by a set of **PRINCIPLES** that guides the agency in all circumstances, irrespective of changes in goals, strategies, management or type of work.

They include:

Championing the unique **MISSISSIPPI STORY**

Advocating for the value of the **ARTS, PLAY, CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION**

Including **EDUCATION** and **LIFELONG LEARNING** as a component of all grants and services

Ensuring a constant vigilance regarding **EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS** and maintaining the value of **BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLANNING**

Pursuing **ACCESS** and **EQUITY** in all work

Supporting Mississippi's **INDIVIDUAL ARTISTS**

Employing **ENTREPRENEURIAL THINKING**

Seeking and developing extensive **PARTNERSHIPS**

Engaging **CREATIVE FUNDING** and maintaining **RESOURCE MANAGEMENT**

**COMMUNICATING** and **EDUCATING POLICYMAKERS**

and the **PUBLIC** about the value of MAC's contribution to arts and culture.

Improving and optimizing the **VALUE** of the **HUMAN FACTOR** by increasing direct service to constituents

Evaluating impact and incorporating professional **PERFORMANCE MEASURES**

Developing and integrating a current direction regarding **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**



# ACCOMPLISHMENTS 2008-2012

- In an unprecedented partnership with the Mississippi Development Authority, MAC unveiled Mississippi's creative economy study, "Realizing the Economic Potential of Creativity in Mississippi," to approximately 400 policy makers and citizens during the Creative Economy Summit. The corresponding website, [www.mscreativeeconomy.com](http://www.mscreativeeconomy.com), was also launched, highlighting the study and including vignettes and resources. Additionally, the Mississippi Economic Council featured support of the creative economy and the concept of growing this innovative sector as one of its major goals in the 2011 publication of "Blueprint Mississippi."
- "Mississippi Arts Hour," MAC's weekly arts interview radio program, celebrated its five-year anniversary of airing on the statewide network of Mississippi Public Broadcasting. The program, hosted by rotating MAC staff, continues to feature in-depth interviews and performances with Mississippi-based artists, craftsmen, musicians, policy makers, and arts supporters and to date has 5,200 listeners per week, with a gross listenership of 16,000.
- "Moving Toward the Art of Good Health," MAC's statewide model pilot program funded by the Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Mississippi Foundation, encouraged students to become physically active through the art of ballroom dancing. The initiative includes the opportunity to learn about dance and wellness, as well as focus on teamwork, manners, and social skills. The program grew from 1 to 10 schools participating statewide in a four-year period.
- The Mississippi Blues Commission was created in 2004 through state legislation. The Mississippi Arts Commission Executive Director is appointed through the legislation to serve on the board and currently serves as Chairman. Over 150 Blues Trail markers have been erected, creating a statewide Blues Trail which attracts tourists and visitors to explore Mississippi's blues culture. Details found at [www.msbluestrail.org](http://www.msbluestrail.org).
- The Mississippi Arts Endowment, managed by the Community Foundation of Greater Jackson and directed by MAC's Board of Commissioners, was created to provide long-term private funding to support the agency's grant programs. The fund is to be used in times of specific need or in the case of federal and/or state budget challenges.
- MAC hosted quarterly visual art exhibits in its office gallery, which included public receptions for the artists and all state employees in the Capitol Complex, as well as members of the Mississippi Legislature. The exhibits promote the outstanding work in our state and feature artists, musicians, and students.
- "Poetry Out Loud," a national and statewide poetry recitation competition for high school students, grew significantly in the last five years, with participation of over 4,500 students, 133 teachers, 213 community members, in 40 different schools, and continues to progress as a vital arts education initiative. Mississippi and MAC are honored and proud that the 2012 National Poetry Out Loud champion was a high school senior from Ridgeland.
- The National Link Up Arts Education Initiative, an innovative partnership of MAC and the Mississippi Department of Education and implemented through the Weill Music Institute at Carnegie Hall curriculum, continues to offer innovative music education to students in the 4th – 6th grades in schools statewide. In collaboration with five symphony and community orchestras in Mississippi, the program culminates at the end of the school year with an interactive symphony concert, designed around the curriculum which features the students' participation. Presently, approximately 12,000 students per year benefit from the program.
- The Culture Club - a collaboration of the cultural agencies of Mississippi which includes the Department of Archives and History, the Library Commission, the Mississippi Arts Commission, and the Mississippi Humanities Council was formed to address cultural needs following Hurricane Katrina. It continues to meet monthly and partner on cultural projects or issues statewide. The Culture Club implemented the restructuring of the Mississippi Poet Laureate program through state legislation. Mississippi native, Natasha Trethewey, was selected as the state's new Poet Laureate and was then appointed as the U.S. Poet Laureate in 2012. Past projects include "A Cultural Charrette" on the Gulf Coast following Katrina and a traveling statewide exhibit featuring the Mississippi composer, William Grant Still. Future plans include development of The Mississippi Literary Trail and various foodways projects.
- Creation and implementation of the Foodways Program and Culinary Arts Apprenticeship within the MAC Heritage Department broaden and enhance the agency's reach statewide. Celebration of this living tradition successfully embodies MAC's approach in honoring all art forms that constitute our cultural fabric.





# LIVE



# WORK



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**mac**

mississippi arts commission

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